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Ingle-side Lills
and
Other Poems.



To

Mrs H. Macdonald
With the best wishes
of the Author.

Archie McRay

Jan-1962

INGLE-SIDE LILTS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

ARCHIBALD M'KAY,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF KILMARNOCK," ETC.

"Song sweetens toil, however rude the sound."

KILMARNOCK:

ARCHIBALD M'KAY, KING STREET.

M.DCCC.LXI.

KILMARNOCK: PRINTED BY JAMES M'KIE.

TO
CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF
"EGERIA," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES,"
"VOICES FROM THE CROWD,"
ETC., ETC.,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.



P R E F A C E.

IN 1855 the author issued, in the form of a pamphlet, a limited edition of a small collection of lyrical poems under the name of "Ingle-side Lilts;" and so favourably was it noticed by the press, that he was led to make it the groundwork of the present volume, to which he has given a similar title. The most of the pieces, therefore, which appeared in the little brochure alluded to, are here reprinted. The other poems, which constitute the greater part of the work, have not, with a few exceptions, been hitherto published in a collected form.

For the simple Scottish dialect, in which his little lays are generally written, the author offers no apology. To him it has always appeared both pithy and melodious, as well as eminently fitted for the faithful delineation of homely Scottish scenes, and for giving forcible expression to Scottish feeling, whether pathetic or humorous; above all, it is his

native tongue, endeared to him by many tender associations. For these reasons he loves it and has adopted it.'

He may add, that in the composition of the various pieces he has invariably aimed at naturalness and simplicity—qualities which he has always admired and considered as excellencies in other writers; but whether he has so far succeeded in that aim, as to give beauty and interest to what he has written, remains with the reader to judge.

124, KING STREET,
Kilmarnock, 25th April, 1861.

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INGLE-SIDE LILTS.

MY AIN COUTHIE DAME.

AIR—"And sae will we yet."

Wi' the gay and the witty
Aft blithesome I've been,
Owre a guid reamin' cog,
In the yill-house at e'en;
But sweeter are my joys,
By the ingle-side at hame,
Wi' my bonnie bits o' bairns
And my ain couthie dame.
My ain couthie dame,
O! my ain couthie dame;
Wi' my bonnie bits o' bairns
And my ain couthie dame.

There's naething that is gaudy
Within our lowly cot,
Sae the cares that wait on grandeur
Our pleasures never blot;
And tho' puirtith whyles keeks in,
O! it canna cule love's flame,
That cheers me wi' my bairns
And my ain couthie dame.
My ain couthie dame, &c.

O! donnert maun the carle be,
Wha likes to dwell alane,
Without the bliss o' woman's charms,
Or smile o' toddlin' wean;
He *may* hae joys, but O! I trew,
To me they wad be tame—
I'm happier wi' my bairns
And my ain couthie dame.
My ain couthie dame, &c.

Tho' sair, sair I maun toil,
'Mid the wintry winds sae bauld,
To keep ilk wee thing's coggie fu',
And cleed it frae the cauld;

Yet I wadna change my state,
E'en for fortune or for fame,
I'm sae happy wi' my bairns
And my ain couthie dame.

My ain couthie dame,
O! my ain couthie dame ;
I'm sae happy wi' my bairns
And my ain couthie dame.

MY AULD GRANNIE'S YAIRDIE.

AIR—"Banks of the Devon."

AMANG the sweet scenes that delighted my childhood,
 Oh, dear was my auld grannie's yairdie to me ;
 It sunward did slope by the side o' the wildwood,
 Whar stood her wee house by the big aiken tree :
 And through the sweet spot ran a clear crystal burnie,
 Whase music fell sweetly and saft on the ear,
 As round ilka auld fuggie stane it wad turn aye,
 Or bickerin' row 'neath the rose-blossomed brier.

Nae gay foreign flowers or fruits had auld grannie
 Within her bit yairdie to mak' it look fair,
 But cowslips, and pinkies, and daisies fu' bonnie,
 And sweet native roses and lilies were there ;
 And there, by the burn, grew the rowan tree that
 shaded
 The seat where she'd rest in the calm sunny noon,
 Ere day's rosy splendour o'er Goatfell had faded,
 And yet sung the laverock the woodlands aboon.

But the things that auld grannie liked best in her
yairdie,

Were taties and kale, whilk she tended wi' care;
And to help her to fend a bit grumphy she reared aye;
For by her ain labour she strove aye to fare.
I mind when Mess John offered ance to send till her
Frae out the kirk coffers a shillin' or twa;
"Na, na," she replied, "I want nae *parish siller*,
To live by industry's the best thing ava."

The gifts o' the schules had been gi'en to her sparely,
But muckle she kent o' the years past awa';
And weel she could tell the sad tale o' Prince Charlie,
For whom her ain gutcher did gloriously fa'.
What thochts thrilled my heart as I first to her
listened,

When fatal Culloden's dread field was her theme—
Methinks I yet see her; her e'e brichtly glistened,
And tears doon her cheek for the vanquished did
stream.

But 'twas na things earthly that grannie maist
cherished:

Religion she prized—'twas her pleasure, her pride;
A love o' its truths in the youngsters she nourished,
And bade them be virtuous whate'er micht betide.

And even in her yairdie instruction she'd gather
Frae ilka sweet blossom that round her did blaw;
"They tell," she wad say, "that joy blooms but to
wither,
And man to the dust, like the wan leaf, maun fa'."

Ah! wildwoods now grow whar her yaird bloomed
sae bonnie;
Like her, the wee house that she won'd in's awa';
And the burn, in sad wailings, her loss seems to
moan aye,
As onward it wanders and sings through the shaw.
But changed though the spot be whar stood her bit
dwallin',
The scenes that are there sweetest feelings awake;
I lo'ed them langsyne, when a wee wayward callan,
And still I revere them for auld grannie's sake.

MY CUTTY PIPE.

My cutty pipe ! my cutty pipe !
 The theme may lowly be,
 But haith I'll tune my harp and sing
 A wee bit lilt to thee;
 For tho' nae whirligigums grace
 Thy form o' sooty hue,
 To me thou aft hast been a joy
 When ither joys were few.

My cutty pipe ! my cutty pipe !
 When steaming in my cheek,
 And, mist-like, owre my auld grey pow
 Ascends thy swirling reek;
 O then sweet fancy waukens up,
 Wi' a' her fairy train,
 And mony a blithesome, happy thocht
 Gangs dancing thro' my brain.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!
When day's hard toils are dune,
Nae bluid-red wine hae I to quaff,
To keep the heart in tune ;
Na, na, the grape's inspiring juice,
Mair gentle gabs maun swill ;
But thanks to fate, I aye hae thee
To whuff and lunt at will.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!
When winter, snell and bare,
Comes roaring frae the Norlan skies,
And maks me croichle sair,
I seek nae doctor's drugs, but tak'
Just twa three puffs o' thee;
Then, like a filly 'mang the hills,
I breathe baith glad and free.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!
Even in the simmer hours,
When lane I seek the burnie's lip,
To muse amang the flowers,
I lean me on some fuggie stane,
And licht thee up wi' glee;
And then tho' a' around is sweet,
'Tis doubly sweet wi' thee.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!

When mirk the e'ening fa's,
And kindly at my wee bit beild
Some couthie cronie ca's,
I prime thee weel, and sen' thee round,
And syne, inspired by thee,
The crack begins—the sang is sung —
The moments blithely flee.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!

Some folks at thee may grue,
And say it's but a waste o' gear
To put thee in the mou';
But what are they, wi' a' their wealth?
Puir scrapin', yammerin' fules;
They only get a shroud at last,
To co'er them in the mools.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!

I ken thou canna gie
A fadeless pleasure to the heart,
For sic we never see;
But when upon my luckless croon
The dunts o' puirtith fa',
Thou help'st to cheer my dowie lot
And soothe my cares awa.

My cutty pipe! my cutty pipe!
Unlike John Barleycorn,
Nae deadly sting thou lea'st behind
To fash me on the morn;
But aye I rise wi' noddle clear,
And when the ribs I ripe,
My joys are a' renewed again
Wi' thee, my cutty pipe!

THE WEE BEGGAR WEAN.

O bid him come in! it's the wee beggar wean;
 O bid him come in frae the cauld wintry rain;
 A tear gushes out frae his bonnie dark e'e—
 A tear that bespeaks the sad ills he maun dree;
 O bid him come in, for we maunna disdain
 To gladden the heart o' the wee beggar wean.

I mind o' him weel when a bairn on the knee;
 Nae dew-silvered rose-bud was fairer than he;
 But on dark dissipation's wild eddying wave
 His parents, alas! were borne doon to the grave;
 And he, helpless thing, was left frien'less and lane,
 To roam amang strangers—a wee beggar wean.

Hark! hark! the dark tempest comes wild up the
 glen;
 Then haste to the door, bring the puir laddie ben;

We'll mak' him fu' blithe wi' the hap o' our beil',
Wi' a daud o' our bread or a gowpen o' meal—
Oh ! little we ken what may come o' our ain—
We aye should be kind to the wee beggar wean.

The lanely bit floweret mair gladsome doth seem
When gently it's kissed by some sweet passing beam;
Sae the fond smile o' kindness his bosom will cheer,
And chase frae his wan cheek the cauld bitter tear—
Then haste bring him in, for oh ! wha could refrain
Frae gladdening the heart o' the wee beggar wean ?

THE MITHER TO HER BAIRNS.

O, BAIRNIES, lie still,
 For your faither's asleep,
 And maun rise to his wark
 When the mornin' beams peep,
 To break his sweet slumber
 It wadna' be richt,
 For he that toils sairly
 Needs rest thro' the night.

Whisht! Davie, ye're nocht
 But a wild skirlin' brat;
 And, Robin, nae mortal
 Kens what ye'd be at—
 A' day ye've been rakin'
 For nests in the shaw,
 And yet, like the lave,
 Ye keep gabblin' awa.

And Tam, ye're sae restless,
Your like was ne'er seen,
Ye mindna the paiks
That I gied ye yestreen;
When ye drew the bit cat
Thro' the house by the lug,
And tied to its tail
Grannie's auld broken jug.

Ye licht-headed gilpies,
O kent ye how sair
Your puir faither labours
To keep ye a' fair—
To keep ye in schulin',
In meat, claes, and shoon,
Ye'd mind what I tell ye
And lessen your din.

In the cuttie wren's nest
By the burn, yont the knowe,
That wee Jamie fand out
When a-herdin' the yowe,
Ye'll no hear a cheep
When the sun has gaen doun—
In ilk ither's bozie
They're a' sleepin' soun'.

Frae them tak' a lesson,
Ye rogues, and lie still,
For mirk lie the shadows
O' nicht on the hill;
And when the sweet morn
Glints again owre the lea,
Then rise, like the birds,
To your daffin' and glee.

MY AULD UNCLE WATTY.

AIR—"Bonnie Dundee."

O! WEEL I ha'e mind o' my auld uncle Watty;
 When but a bit callan I stood by his knee,
 Or clamb the big chair, whar at e'enin' he sat aye,
 He made us fu' blithe wi' his fun and his glee;
 For O! he was knackie, and couthie and crackie,
 Baith humour and lair in his noddle had he—
 The youths o' the clauchan he'd keep a' a-laughin',
 Wi' his queer observations and stories sae slee.

The last Hogmanay that we met in his cottie,
 To talk owre the past, and the nappy to pree,
 Some auld-farrant sangs, that were touchin' and
 witty,
 He sung till the bairnies were dancin' wi' glee;
 And syne in the dance, like a youngster o' twenty,
 He lap and he flang wi' auld Nannie Macfee—
 In a' the blithe meeting nae ane was sae canty,
 Sae jokin', sae gabby, sae furthy and free.

And O! had ye seen him that e'enin' when Rory
Was kippled to Maggie o' Riccarton Mill;
Wi' jokes rare and witty he kept up the glory,
Till morning's faint glimmer was seen on the hill.
O! he was a body, when warmed wi' the toddy,
Whase wit to ilk bosom enchantment could gie;
For funnin' and daffin', and punnin' and laughin',
Throughout the hale parish nae equal had he.

But worn out at last wi' life's cares and its labours,
He bade an adieu to his frien's a' sae dear,
And sunk in death's sleep, sair bewailed by his nee-
bours,

Wha yet speak his praise, and his mem'ry revere.
Whar slumbers the dust o' my auld auntie Matty,
We dug him a grave wi' the tear in our e'e;
And there laid the banes o' my auld uncle Watty,
To moulder in peace by the big aiken-tree.

ROBIN THE PLOUGHMAN.

Written for the Kilmarnock Burns Club, 25th Jan., 1856.

AIR—"Last May a brow wooer."

COME, let us forget a' our cares for a wee,
 And our joys on this e'ening renew, man;
 And wi' sang and wi' crack gar the time blithely flee,
 In honour o' Robin, the ploughman, the plough-
 man,
 In honour o' Robin, the ploughman.

O weel may auld Scotia be proud o' his name,
 For his sangs aye to nature were true, man;
 And weel may we twine the rich garland o' fame,
 In honour o' Robin, the ploughman, the plough-
 man,
 In honour o' Robin, the ploughman.

He caredna for newfangled phrase when he sung,
 For our auld-warld words he did lo'e, man;

And ilk ane fand their *pith* as they drapp'd frae his
tongue,

And gloried in Robin, the ploughman, the plough-
man,

And gloried in Robin, the ploughman.

And haith! to our bardie nae subject cam' wrang—

Even the wee gowan sprinkled wi' dew, man,
What flower-loving minstrel e'er hallowed wi' sang,
Like Coila's blithe Robin, the ploughman, the
ploughman?

Like Coila's blithe Robin, the ploughman?

And the wee siller burn bickerin' thro' the green
shaw,

Now seen and now hid frae the view, man,
Wi' its ilka bit turn, and its ilka bit fa',
Whae'er sung like Robin, the ploughman, the
ploughman,
Whae'er sung like Robin, the ploughman.

And then frae our lassies, sae sweet and sae fair,

What warm inspiration he drew, man,—
When he sings o' their charms we forget ilka care,
And lo'e them like Robin, the ploughman, the
ploughman,
And lo'e them like Robin, the ploughman.

Tho' puirtith at times made him dowie and wae,
Independence aye sat on his brow, man,
And he knuckled to nane wi' his sang or his say,
For manly was Robin, the ploughman, the
ploughman,
For manly was Robin, the ploughman.

And dearer than a', he was Liberty's frien'—
Her rights he defended, I trew, man,
For he lashed a' her faes wi' his satire sae keen,
Then hurrah for bauld Robin, the ploughman, the
ploughman,
Hurrah for bauld Robin, the ploughman!

“JOUK AND LET THE JAW GAE BY.”

AIR—“Jockie’s grey breeks.”

O! SAY not life is ever drear,
 For midst its scenes of toil and care,
 There’s aye some joy the heart to cheer—
 There’s aye some spot that’s green and fair;
 To gain that spot the aim be ours,
 For nocht we’ll get unless we try;
 And when misfortune round us lours,
 We’ll jouk and let the jaw gae by.

The wee bit floweret in the glen
 Maun bend beneath the surly blast;
 The birdie seeks some leafy den,
 And shelters till the storm is past;
 The “ourie sheep,” when winds blaw snell,
 To some lowne spot for refuge hie;
 And sae, frae ills we canna quell,
 We’ll jouk and let the jaw gae by.

Yet there are ills we a' should brave—
The ills that man on man would throw,
For oh! he's but a thowless slave,
That patient bears oppression's wo;
But if 'tis but the taunts of pride,
Or envy's tongue that would annoy,
'Tis nobler far to turn aside,
And jouk and let the jaw gae by.

In worldly gear we may be bare—
We may ha'e mony a dreary hour—
But never, never nurse despair,
For ilka ane maun taste the sour:
Even kings themsel's, wi' a' their power—
'Wi' a' their pomp and honours high—
'Neath adverse blasts are forced to cower,
And jouk to let the jaw gae by.

But mark this truth—the ills that blight
Are aft the fruits that folly brings;
Then shun the wrong, pursue the right,
Frae *this* the truest pleasure springs;
And fret not though dark clouds should spread
At times across life's troubled sky,
Sweet sunshine will the gloom succeed—
Sae jouk and let the jaw gae by.

COME LOVELY SPRING.

O! WAEFU' and weary
The winter has been;
'Twas dowie at morning,
'Twas eerie at e'en;
And lang, lang I've sighed
For the fair vernal flowers,
For the blue cloudless skies
And the sweet sunny hours.

Then come, lovely Spring,
Deck the bare woodland bower,
And nurse wi' thy soft smiles
Ilk bonnie wee flower;
And hush the wild tempest
That's soughin' alang,
And waken, O, waken
Ilk wee birdie's sang.

The auld will be blithesome
Thy glories to see,
And e'en the wee bairnies
Will hail thee wi' glee,
As they hie to the woodlands,
In joy and in pride,
To pa' the first flowers
By some bonnie burnside.

Then come, lovely Spring,
We are langing for thee;
For cauld, hoary cranreuch
Yet lies on the lea;
O, come wi' thy sun-glints
And pearls o' dew,
And the verdure and beauty
Of nature renew.

THE COTTAR'S WEE BAIRN.

O! BLITHE is the life o' the cottar's wee bairn;
 Far, far frae the toon, wi' its art and its pride,
 She toddles about 'mang the flowers and the fern,
 As lightsome's the wild bee that hums by her side;
 Her hame's a bit beild by the auld divot dyke,
 That fends the kail-yaird frae the sheep and the kye;
 Tho' lowly it seems, we nicht envy the like,
 For nature smiles round it in beauty and joy.

A bonnie rose-bush the wee winnock owrehings,
 Wi' fair, snawy blossoms, a' richly arrayed,
 And an auld saughan-tree, where the wild birdie sings,
 Throws owre the bit gavel its sheltering shade;
 And a burnie, owre whilk spans a wee rustic brig,
 Is seen thro' the bourtrees ayont the kail-yaird,
 Sweet-kissing the edge o' the green grassy rig,
 Where the tether'd pet lammie is nibbling the
 swaird.

But yonder's the bairn tripping round the house-en';
How blithesome! how fair in her simple attire!
The first flowers o' simmer she brings frae the glen,
For auld grannie to smell as she sits by the fire;
Her wee sisters rin wi' their win'-tousled hair,
To welcome her hame wi' the posie sae gay;
And even auld Towser louns up frae his lair,
And, joining them, leads, like some gen'ral, the way.

How different the life o' the puir factory wean—
Frae morning till e'en she maun wearily toil,
And scarce see the sun thro' the steam-darken'd pane,
When nature's lit up wi' her loveliest smile.
But such is this wearifu' warld, I trew—
How strangely divided its joy and its care!
Ane sips in its sweets as the flow'ret the dew,
And anither, alas! a' its sorrows maun share.

BE KIND TO AULD GRANNIE.

Set to music by T. S. GLEADHILL, Esq., in the "Lyric Gems
of Scotland."

BE kind to auld grannie, for noo she is frail,
As a time-shatter'd tree bending low in the gale;
When ye were wee bairnies, tott, totting about,
Shewatched ye when *in*, and she watched ye when *out*;
And aye when ye chanced, in your daffin' and fun,
To dunt your wee heads on the cauld staney grun',
She lifted ye up, and she kissed ye fu' fain,
Till a' your bit cares were forgotten again,—
Then be kind to auld grannie, for noo she is frail,
As a time-shatter'd tree bending low in the gale.

When first in your breasts rose that feeling divine,
That's waked by the tales and the sangs o' langsyne,
Wi' auld-warld cracks she would pleasure inspire,
In the lang winter nights as she sat by the fire;

Or melt your young hearts wi' some sweet Scottish lay,
Like "The Flowers o' the Forest," or "Auld Robin
Gray;"

Though eerie the win' blew around our bit cot,
Grim winter and a' its rude blasts were forgot,—
Then be kind to auld grannie, for noo she is frail,
As a time-shatter'd tree bending low in the gale.

And mind, though the blithe day o' youth noo is yours,
Time will wither its joys as wild winter the flowers;
And your step, that's noo licht as the bound o' the roe,
Wi' cheerless auld age may be feeble and slow;
An' the frien's o' your youth to the grave may be gane,
And ye on its brink may be tottering alane;
Oh! think how consoling some frien' would be then,
When the gloaming o' life comes like mist o'er the
glen,—

Then be kind to auld grannie, for noo she is frail,
As a time-shatter'd tree bending low in the gale.


THE LAIRD O' GLENHORN.

AIR—"Last May a brow wooer."

LANGSYNE, when I first to my Tammie was wed,
 We lived wi' ilk ither fu' canty;
 Nae heart-breaking struggles wi' puirtith we had,
 For he was a bit laird, and had plenty, had plenty;
 For he was a bit laird, and had plenty.

And to prove a guid wifie I span and I toiled,
 And lo'ed him as dam lo'es its lammie;
 But husbands, like bairns, may wi' kindness be spoiled,
 And sae it turned out wi' my Tammie, my Tammie;
 And sae it turned out wi' my Tammie.

I thocht when in winter he wrocht on the lea,
 Whar round him the wind whistled drearie,
 That a toothfu' ilk morn o' the bauld barley bree
 Wad keep his heart lightsome and cheerie, and
 cheerie;
 Wad keep his heart lightsome and cheerie.



Sae I caft a bit keg o't, and gied him a dram
When he gaed to the plough or the harrow;
But trowth, what was ettled for comfort to Tam,
Soon laid the foundation o' sorrow, o' sorrow;
Soon laid the foundation o' sorrow.

For ere the first hauf o' a towmont gaed by,
Ilk hour o' the day he wad want it,
And gif I but dared his request to deny,
He raged like a body dementit, dementit;
He raged like a body dementit.

I saw I had err'd; but I thocht it owre late
My errors to think o' reformin',
Sae I just let the puir silly chiel tak' his fate,
And the upshot, I trew, was alarmin', alarmin';
And the upshot, I trew, was alarmin'.

For he drank till he wasted the lands o' Glenhorn,
O' whilk his forbears made him lairdie—
Then he hung himsel' up on the auld wither'd thorn,
That stauns by the burn in the yairdie, the yairdie;
That stauns by the burn in the yairdie.

And noo I hae gotten anither bit man,
But faith I tak' tent what I'm doin'—
I stick like a burr to the teetotal plan,
For whisky owre aften brings ruin, brings ruin;
For whisky owre aften brings ruin.

TO A BURNIE.

Air—"Scenes of wo and scenes of pleasure."

BONNIE wee bit wimplin' burnie,
 Lane and nameless tho' thou be,
 Yet, oh yet, the noblest river
 Ne'er was hauf sae dear to me.
 When I see thee, like a moon-beam,
 Glint alang thy banks sae fair,
 Lovely Mary, lang departed,
 Seems again to meet me there.

Yes, thou bonnie wee bit burnie,
 Winding sweet by wood and brake,
 Aft by thee I've met my Mary,
 And I lo'e thee for her sake.
 Dear to me thy banks o' breckan,
 Dear to me thy crystal wave,
 To my bosom they are hallowed—
 Hallowed as my Mary's grave.

THE LADS WI' THE KILT AND THE PLAID.

AIR—"The Campbells are coming."

Hurrah for the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!
 Hurrah for the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!
 When bloody and dark rolls the battle's rough tide,
 How gallant the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!

I trew they were nursed 'mang the hills and the plains
 Where the glorious spirit of liberty reigns;
 Where their young hearts were fired wi' the patriot
 flame
 That blazes and burns round a Wallace's name.
 Hurrah for the lads! &c.

When comes the fierce onset and dangers are rife,
 True, bold-hearted heroes, they rush to the strife;
 The cauld sturdy steel they indignantly draw,
 The foemen they flee, or in thousands they fa'.
 Hurrah for the lads! &c.

When "Scotland for ever!" resounds o'er the field,
Each arm wi' fresh vigour its weapon doth wield;
Each eye kindles up wi' a valorous fire,
And each heart for auld Scotia is proud to expire.

Hurrah for the lads! &c.

O lang may the laurels that crown them be green,
And lang may they be, as they often have been,
The shield of our country, when dangers betide,
The brave Scottish lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!

Then hurrah for the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!


Hurrah for the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!

When bloody and dark rolls the battle's rough tide,
How gallant the lads wi' the kilt and the plaid!

MY LADDIE LIES LOW.

ALAS! how true the boding voice
That whispered aft to me—
“Thy bonnie lad will ne’er return
To Scotland or to thee!”
O! true it spoke, though hope the while
Shed forth its brightest beam,
For low in death my laddie lies,
By Alma’s bloody stream.

I heard the village bells proclaim
That glorious deeds were done—
I heard wi’ joy the gladsome shout,
“The field, the field is won!”
I thought my lad would come again,
And fair and gay would seem;
But vain the thought! cold, cold he lies
By Alma’s bloody stream.



O! wo to him whose thirst for power
Has rolled the bolts of war,
And made my laddie bleed and die
Frae hame and friends afar.
Alas! his form I ne'er shall see,
Except in Fancy's dream;
For low he lies, where brave he fought,
By Alma's bloody stream.

SONG OF THE LABOURER.

O WHY should we murmur and mourn at our fate ?
 Tho' hardships are often our fa', man,
 Yet blithe let us toil, for there's something that's
 great
 In braving life's storms when they blaw, man.

Our wee bits o' bairns maun hae duddies to wear,
 And crowdie and shelter and a', man ;
 And wha wadna strain every nerve for his ain,
 Cares nocht for humanity's law, man.

The rich may gae by us wi' cauldride disdain,
 Arrayed in their garments sae braw, man ;
 But if true manly parts ne'er ennoble their hearts,
 As *men* they are naething ava, man.

On wild moorland flower fa's the saft dew's o' e'en,
 As sweet as on flower in the shaw, man ;
 So nature's rich gifts to the peasant are gi'en,
 As weel as to lord in his ha', man.

Frae ranks o' the lowly a Shakspeare arose,
And say wha a nobler e'er saw, man;
'Mang bleak scenes o' toil sang the minstrel o' Coil,
Whase strains charm the hearts o' us a', man.

Like them, few may gain the bright summit o' fame,
Where, midst the renowned, sit the twa, man;
But wi' hands or wi' mind we may better our kind,
Ere frae earth we are summoned awa', man.

The wee wimpling burn helps to drive the mill-wheel
Although that its waters be sma', man;
Sae the humblest o' men some assistance may len'
The wheel o' improvement to ca', man.

A warm helping hand we may freely extend
To him that misfortunes befa', man—
We may stand for the right against tyranny's might,
That frae us life's pleasures wad draw, man.

Let such be our aim while we warsle thro' life;
And tho' fortune should ne'er on us daw, man,
O let us not fret, nor this truth e'er forget—
Heaven looks for some guid frae us a', man.

THE BEST THING WI' GEAR IS THE
HAINING O'T.

TUNE—"The Spinning o't."

I TREW there's a charm in a wee pickle gear,
And wha wadna strive at the gaining o't?
It mak's a puir body baith canty and fier,
If honesty's had the obtaining o't;
But haith, it needs guiding, or soon like the snaw
That melts frae the dyke, it will vanish awa,
And lea'e us wi' nocht but our haffits to claw—
Sae the best thing wi' gear is the haining o't.

Some brag o' the gowpins o' gowd they can mak',
Yet fortune, they're ever complaining o't;
And they see wi' surprise their bit house gaun to
wrack,
Tho' rowth is brocht in for maintaining o't.
But if what is brocht in is unwisely laid out,
Cauld puirtith will come wi' its lang wizzent snout,
And mak' the bit meal-pock as souple's a clout—
Sae the best thing wi' gear is the haining o't.

The well that we drink frae is sure to rin dry,

If there's owre muckle tooming and draining o't—
And then owre its loss how we yaumer and sigh,

When there micht hae been plenty remaining o't—
And sae, tho' your pouch were as fu' as a nit,
If ye're owre often in't a' its treasure will flit,
And lea'e you in duds frae the head to the fit—

Sae the best thing wi' gear is the haining o't.

WHEN BARNEY'S LOVED MOLLY WAS
DYING.

WHEN Barney's loved Molly was dying,
He sung with a sorrowful heart—
"Shure, shure now it sets me a-crying,
To think we for ever must part.
For twenty long years, on life's journey,
Assisting each other, we've trod ;
And, och ! who will comfort your Barney
When you are anunder the sod ?

"The priest may say, 'Barney, be aisy,
For death is the portion of all ;'
But shure I'd be hardened and crazy
To drop not a tear at your fall ;
For, while the blessed sun is above me,
No crathur I ever will find,
Who will with such tinderness love me,
Or rear up the pigs to my mind !

“ When first in your ould mother’s cabin,
 I met you when harvest was o’er—
 With love your young bosom was throbbing,
 And mine was all bliss to the core.
 Och ! swate was the glance of your eye then—
 Like dew on the shamrock it shone;
 Or moonshine that lighted the sky then,
 Above the green fields of Tyrone.

“ Now, Molly, our joys are all over,
 But, could my dear life save your own,
 It’s *myself* that the cowl’d turf would cover,
 And *you* that my loss would bemoan.
 Yet still I will hould it my duty,
 And all through regard to yourself,
 To wed not again though some beauty
 Should tempt me with nations of pelf.”

Thus Barney breathed forth his oration;
 But when Molly’s *wake* had come round,
 The whisky stopped all lamentation,
 And once more in love he was bound;
 For Biddy O’Flinn, from Killarney,
 All fresh as a rose-bud, was there,
 And with her sly looks and her blarney,
 His heart she did fairly ensnare.

“Dear Biddy,” he said, “it’s our nathur
Intirely love’s power to obey,
Then troth if you’ll wed me, swate crathur,
I’ll sarve you by night and by day.”
“Och, honey!” she cried, “I’m your own then;”
And sure, when the fun’ral was o’er,
Old Patrick, the priest, made them one then,
And Molly was thought of no more.

THE THRIFTY BIT WIFIE.

O, **THE** bachelor's life is a wearifu' life,
 Sae to keep me mair blithe, I maun hae a bit wifie;
 I carena for riches, if thrifty she be,
 For the thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me;
 The wifie for me, the wifie for me,
 The thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me.

Some lo'e the fair form, and some lo'e the sweet face,
 Some lo'e the licht step and the maidenly grace,
 Some lo'e the red lips sae delicious to pree,
 But the thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me;
 The wifie for me, the wifie for me,
 The thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me.


As the sun cheers ilk bonnie wee flower in the shaw,
 Sae a thrifty bit wifie cheers a puir body's ha';
 Ilk thing seems to thrive 'neath the glance o' her e'e,
 Sae the thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me;
 The wifie for me, the wifie for me,
 The thrifty bit wifie's the wifie for me.

CULLODEN'S BLOODY HEATH.

AIR—"Rousseau's Dream."

O'ER the brow of yonder mountain
Twilight's dusky shades appear;
'Tis the hour when by the fountain
Oft I met my Evan dear.
Sweet as music's melting numbers
Were the words he then did breathe;
Now, alas! in death he slumbers,
On Culloden's bloody heath.

'Neath the noble Marnock's banners,
'Mid the gory conflict's swell,
For his country's rights and honours,
Bold he stood where heroes fell;
And when Freedom's knell was sounded,
Still the sword he scorned to sheath,
Till by ruthless vengeance wounded
On Culloden's bloody heath.



Then, when life's last drops were stealing
From my Evan's bleeding breast,
No kind voice, in tones of feeling,
Soothed his dying woes to rest.
But 'tis past—he nobly sleepeth
Nature's flowery turf beneath,
Where my spirit nightly weepeth,
On Culloden's bloody heath.


THE LAIRD O' NEEP KNOWES.

ARR—"The Campbells are coming."

COME, drink to the health o' the Laird o' Neep Knowes!
 Come, drink to the health o' the Laird o' Neep Knowes!
 Aye fair be his rigs and aye thriving his ewes,
 For he merits a' blessin's, the Laird o' Neep Knowes.

On the banks o' the Marnock his trig housie stands;
 Ye'd think it was biggit wi' wee fairy hands;
 Sae cosie it sits whar the clear water rows,
 By the side o' the plantin' on bonnie Neep Knowes.

He wins aye our love at the verra first sicht,
 As if it was dune by some slee, pauky slicht,
 And the langer we ken him the stronger it grows,
 Sae furthy's the gait o' the Laird o' Neep Knowes.



He'll lay aff his tale like the wisest o' men,
Or gie ye a sang frae his ain graphic pen,
Or crack a bit joke that will tickle your paws—
He's an auld-farrant carle, the Laird o' Neep Knowes.

And he needsna the maut when he cracks or he sings,
But gie him cauld water just fresh frae the springs,
His kindest feelings at ance it will rouse,
Sae social and blithe is the Laird o' Neep Knowes.

Then drink to the health o' the Laird o' Neep Knowes!
Then drink to the health o' the Laird o' Neep Knowes!
Aye fair be his rigs, and aye thriving his ewes,
For he merits a' blessings, the Laird o' Neep Knowes!

D R U N K Y E S T R E E N .

AIR—"Kissed Yestreen."

YE vile drucken dyvour, ye're fairly gaun mad,
 Ye've daidled and drunk every penny we had ;
 And even the duds that your hurdies should screen,
 Ye took to the pawn, and got drunk yestreen !

Drunk yestreen ! drunk yestreen !

Ye took to the pawn, and got drunk yestreen !
 In spite o' the warnings and counsel I've gien,
 Again, like a sot, ye got drunk yestreen !

And like ither drinkers, o' tyrants ye crack,
 And swear that the Kirk and the State's gaun to
 wrack ;

But a tyrant, forsooth, to yoursel' ye hae been,
 Wi' drinking the maut as ye drunk yestreen !

Drunk yestreen ! drunk yestreen !

Wi' drinking the maut as ye drunk yestreen !
 And had ye the power, man, your kintra, I ween,
 Ye'd pawn for the drink that ye drunk yestreen !

But, man, though ye've lost a' regard for yoursel',
Your heart still might feel for wee Davie and Bell;
Fuir things! wi' fell hunger, tears fa' frae their e'en,
And what wad hae fed them ye drunk yestreen!

Drunk yestreen! drunk yestreen!

And what wad hae fed them ye drunk yestreen!
But the judgment o' Heaven, and that will be seen,
Will fallow the drink that ye drunk yestreen!

Thus spak' the guidwife, and her words they were true,
For he doon the stair tumbled neist nicht he gat fou;
And there lay the sot wi' his neck broken clean,
A warning to a' that get drunk at e'en!

Drunk at e'en! drunk at e'en!

A warning to a' that get drunk at e'en!
Sae, tent me, the chiel to himsel' is nae frien',
Wha sooks at the maut, and gets drunk at e'en!

DRAFF-POCKS HING ON ILKA ANE.

Suggested by the old Scottish saying,—“Every ane has his
ain draff-pock.”

SOME fain would gar a body trew
They ne'er hae fauts ava,
And aye are pure as simmer's dew,
Or winter's driven snaw;
But search wi' carefu' scannin' e'e
Beneath their outward cloak,
And in some neuk you're sure to see
Their ain weel-fill'd draff-pock.

Even men o' lair, wha write and tauk
To mak' us a' gang richt,
Just try them in the weighing bauk,
Ye'll fin' them scrimpit wecht;
Na, even our ain Mess John himsel',
The idol o' his flock,
Tho' douce he seems, I'm wae to tell,
He has his ain draff-pock.

Yes, draff-pocks hing on ilka ane;
This truth nae man can doubt;
“Some hing afore, some hing ahin’,
Some hing a’ round about.”
Sae ere at ithers ye gaffaw,
Or raise the senseless joke,
Correct yoursel’ and fling awa’
Your ain ill-faur’d draff-pock.

AGAIN WE'RE MET IN MERRY MOOD.

Written for the Kilmarnock Burns Club, Jan. 25, 1861.

AIR—"A man's a man for a' that."

AGAIN we're met in merry mood
 Wi' bickers reaming fu', man,
 To sing the sang, and ca' the crack,
 In honour o' the ploughman.
 Then come, we'll toast the ploughman chiel,
 The noble-hearted ploughman;
 Whase very name gars ilka Scot
 Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

He's no like some that shine awae,
 Syne vanish frae the view, man;
 For aye as ilka year comes round,
 Mair glorious seems the ploughman.
 Then come, we'll toast the ploughman chiel,
 The ever-charming ploughman;
 Whase very name gars ilka Scot
 Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

He skilfu' struck ilk bosom-chord,
 For ilka chord he knew, man;
 And sae the heart, responsive, pays
 Its homage to the ploughman.
 Then come, we'll toast the ploughman chiel,
 The soul-enchanting ploughman;
 Whase very name gars ilka Scot
 Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

The laverock liltin in the lift,
 New sprung frae fields o' dew, man,
 Ne'er sings a sweeter, truer sang
 Than Scotia's canty ploughman.
 Then come, we'll toast the ploughman chiel,
 The bosom-thrilling ploughman;
 Whase very name gars ilka Scot
 Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

Nor were his sangs but empty sounds;
 For wit and sense, I trew, man,
 Aye took their place in ilka line
 That cam' frae Rab, the ploughman;
 Then come, we'll toast the ploughman chiel,
 The truth-inspiring ploughman;
 Whase very name gars ilka Scot
 Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

Now to your feet—your bicker grip,
We'll pledge the Bard anew, man—
The first o' Nature's minstrel-band—
The truly gifted ploughman.
Yes, let us toast the ploughman chiel,
The great, the glorious ploughman;
Whase name will aye gar ilka Scot
Cock up his bonnet blue, man.

OUR AULD SCOTS SANGS.


OH ! weel I lo'e our auld Scots sangs,
 The mournfu' and the gay—
 They charmed me by a mither's knee
 In bairnhood's happy day;
 And even yet, tho' owre my pow
 The snaws of age are flung,
 The bluid louns joyfu' in my veins,
 Whene'er I hear them sung.

They bring the fond smile to the cheek,
 Or tear-drap to the e'e—
 They bring to mind auld cronies kind,
 Wha sung them aft wi' glee:
 We seem again to hear the voice
 Of mony a lang-lost frien'—
 We seem again to grip the hand
 That lang in dust has been.

And oh, how true our auld Scots sangs,
When Nature they pourtray!
We think we hear the wee bit burn
Gaun bickerin' doun the brae.
We see the spot, tho' far awa,
Where first life's breath we drew,
And a' the gowden scenes of youth
Seem rising to the view.

And dear I lo'e the wild war strains
Our langsyne minstrels sung:
They rouse wi' patriotic fires
The hearts of auld and young;
And even the dowie dirge that wails
Some brave but ruined band,
Inspires us wi' a warmer love
For hame and fatherland.

Yes, leese me on our auld Scots sangs—
The sangs of love and glee—
The sangs that tell of glorious deeds,
That made auld Scotland free.
What tho' they sprung frae simple bards,
Wha kent nae rules of art,
They ever, ever yield a charm
That lingers round the heart.




ENGLISH POEMS.

THE BARD.

Originally printed in "Chambers's Edinburgh Journal."

Who are the teachers of the Bard ? All things—
Spring, clothing, as in love, the forest bare ;
Summer in rose-wreathed robes ; and Autumn fair,
With golden fruits ; and Winter wild, when rings
The storm's rude music,—all to him are springs
Of deep entrancement and of solemn thought—
Pure founts of inspiration, whence are brought
The luscious sweets that on the world he flings.
The bright-winged insect sailing in the light,
The flower, the stream, the rock, the tree, the bird,
The sky at sunny noon, or star-lit night,
The sea when calm, or when by tempests stirred,
He scans ; and raptured with the themes sublime
He sings his noble strains that perish but




'Tis not alone the streams, the woods, the flowers,
The gorgeous sunsets, or the star-gemmed night,
Or ocean lashed by the wild tempest's might,
That wake the Poet's sympathetic powers ;
To man, to all, his love, his heart is given :
And woman's smile to him is dearer far
Than purest lustre of the loveliest star,
That bursts in beauty from the blue of heaven.
He revels 'mid the sweetness of her charms,
As wild bee 'mong the rose's purple leaves—
Love's tenderest, holiest glow his bosom warms,
And midst his joy he, all impassioned, weaves
His deathless songs that charm us as they flow,
And, next to woman fair, crown all our bliss below.

The Poet's heart to all that's tender clings :
How sweet he sings a mother's melting love !
We feel as if an angel from above
Were hovering near us, uttering heavenly things.
And hark ! how sad, how solemn is his strain
O'er Beauty's bier ! All mournfully it flows
As winds that sweep the vales at Autumn's close,
Wailing the loss of Flora's golden train.
For joy he has a smile, for wo a tear—
A tear that soothes as dew the sun-dried flowers ;

Even childhood's guileless glee to him is dear—
It calls to mind his own sweet early hours,
When blithe he frolicked by a mother's knee,
Or gambolled with his peers on daisy-dotted lea.


Even man's dark passions are to him a school :
Within their awful vortex, deep and wild,
Germs of bright intellect and hopes that smiled,
He sees engulfed ; as in some yawning pool
The wind-blown seed is lost that might have been
A towering tree upon the mountain steep,
Or in the vale, sheltering the " ourie sheep,"
Or shivering kine from Winter's tempests keen.
But chief, the nobler attributes of mind,
And warm affections he delights to note—
With them his finest sympathies are twined ;
And virtue, whether found in hall or cot,
In ermined robes or garments thin and bare,
To him has countless charms, all sweet, all heavenly fair.

When Freedom is his theme, how bold his lays
Peal forth in glorious music from his lyre !
Man, tyrant-trodden, kindles at his fire,
And dark oppression trembles to its base
And mark his warmth, his eloquence d



When meek Religion, all her charms revealing,
Inspires his soul with high and holy feeling,
Bidding him sing at Truth's eternal shrine.
Then, like the voice of Spring, when crowned with
wreaths,
And decked in dewy pearls she walks the plains,
His every tone of coming glory breathes,
And as entranced we hang upon his strains,
An upward impulse to the soul is given,
And round us seem to float the harmonies of heaven.


Then who the Poet's glorious gift would slight?
As the fair moon, when she her charms unveils,
Sheds a soft radiance 'mong the hills and dales,
Cheering each lone scene through the silent night;
So 'mong his fellow-men his thoughts he throws—
Each thought soul-breathed—a world-refining light,
That makes the dark spots of the mind more bright,
And soothes the heart amid its night of woes;
Or, as the morning's smile to dew-belled flowers,
Are the rich beamings of his ardent soul
To weary man,—they gild life's gloomy hours,
As streaks the sun the sombre clouds that roll
Athwart his path, when, beauteous, he comes forth,
Scattering his golden glories o'er the earth.



W I N T E R .

BORNE on his tempest-driven car,
Lo ! weary Winter's come ;
And snow-wreaths lie where flowerets grew
Around the peasant's home.
Beneath the blast, the naked woods
In doleful cadence sigh,
As if they mourned in deepest wo
Their faded drapery.

How bleak the banks that lately bloomed
In Summer's flowery pride !
No wild rose sheds its fragrant sweets
Along the streamlet's side ;
No little bird in bower or brake,
Pours forth its liquid strains ;
No insect hums ; but round and round
A dreary dulness reigns.



Yet still amid the sullen gloom
Of Winter wild and rude,
To Nature's votary each spot
With beauty is imbued :
Where green leaves on the willows grew,
Above the limpid stream,
Lo! icy pearls, like silvery drops,
In countless numbers gleam.

And see! the dark pines on the steep
Are decked with crispy snow;
And strange fantastic frost-wrought forms
Adorn the rocks below.
Even by the woodland's shadowy path,
Where faintly beams the day,
All beauteous seems each little nook
In Nature's white array.

But solemn thoughts wild Winter wakes—
It lifts the mind on high,
And seems to say—"Frail man, take heed,
Thy winter draweth nigh;
For soon beneath the frost of age,
Thou'lt languish and decay,
And, like the Autumn's withered leaves,
Be mixed with kindred clay."

Ah ! these are thoughts that stir the soul
Of him that thinks aright—
O, may they oft recur to us
Ere comes death's dreamless night;
And may our actions God-like be
Through all life's toils and pains,
That we may gain a fairer world
Where Winter never reigns.

H O M E .

Written in the Summer of 1850.


MY Lyre ! though still unknown to fame thou art,
Awake again ! let Home be now thy theme ;
For, oh ! that word is sacred to my heart—
Its very sound, like some enchanting dream,
Enkindles in my soul fond thoughts, that seem
To bear me back to years long passed away,
When happy looks and smiles of love would beam
From those now mouldering in the silent clay,
Unconscious that I still through life's dark mazes
stray.

In Fancy's eye appear sweet boyhood's haunts—
The tranquil mill-stream near my father's cot—
The woody dell that by its margin slants,—
Ah ! these are scenes that ne'er can be forgot :

Bathed in ethereal sunshine seems each spot,—
The tall elm tree, on which my name I graved,
Though now o'ergrown with many a gnarled knot,
Still waves beside the stream as erst it waved,
When 'neath it, in the pool, my youthful limbs I laved.

Before me rise the braes I loved to climb
Adventurous for the little songster's nest;
All fair they seem, as in that blissful time,
With bud, and leaf, and sun-lit blossom dressed.
The verdant lawn too, that my feet oft pressed,
When in the village-sports I joined with glee,
Blooms on my sight, and wakes within my breast
A train of recollections, dear to me,
Of happy, happy days, I never more shall see.

Yet, oh, in fancy, let me linger there—
The spot is with my dearest feelings twined,—
There first I felt a father's tender care,
And knew a mother's love, sincere and kind;
Not for a moment to my welfare blind,
At morn, at eve, they'd point out virtue's road,
And store, with holy truths, my youthful mind—
Truths that allure the soul from earth to God—
From man's debasing haunts to angels' blessed abode.



While thus I ponder on life's early day,
Across my mind what sad reflections come !
How many hearts that then our hearth made gay
Now sleep the dreamless slumber of the tomb !
Yet, from my natal spot can memory roam ?
Ah, no! the very graves of kindred dear,
Are sacred links that chain my soul to Home—
They tell of many a wo, of many a tear
That flowed, when friends beloved were laid on death's
dark bier.

But deem not *all* was sad; for there were joys
And smiles that charmed my dear paternal hearth;
At eve when toil was o'er, would frequent rise
The song of guileless love or strain of mirth.
The tale of ruthless war or suffering worth
Would then go round, creating in each breast
The wish—the virtuous wish—that o'er the earth
Sweet peace would spread her wings—that man would
rest
From all unholy strife, and make his fellow blessed.

And then, perhaps, would Bunyan's page be read,
Or book that told of Scotia's martyrs brave,
Or how a Wallace for his country bled,
Or fought a Bruce, his bleeding land to save.

Ah ! these were sweet, ennobling hours, that gave
The germs of noble feelings to the mind—

Feelings that, till the darkness of the grave
Shall hide me from the world, my heart shall bind
To Home, delightful Home, where all was good and
kind.

Home ! Home ! yes, sacred is that little word !

When breathed to war's lone captive in his cell,
Sweet thoughts, as if by magic's influence stirred,

Rush on his soul. His long-lost native dell

He dreams is still his home ; the Sabbath bell
Chimes on his ear ; his wife, his children fair

Before him stand ; but ah ! he starts—the spell
Is broken—no kind wife or child is there :

Alas ! war's bitter woes his heart must longer bear.

And say, what soothes the mariner, far away

On distant seas, when round him tempests rise—
When ocean dashes to the heavens its spray,

And darkness, ominous, enshrouds the skies ?

Oh ! 'tis the thought of Home ! His fancy hies
To love's young bower, in sylvan beauty dressed ;

His Mary meets him there with laughing eyes,
And, in the happy moment, to his breast
He clasps the lovely maid, and mid the storm is
blessed.

The exile, too, that from his country dear
Tyrannic laws have haply driven away,
Feels all entranced when on his ravished ear,
The name of Home is breathed in some sweet lay;
He sees the brother that, in boyhood's day,
Would with him roam the wood or climb the hill—
He sees the sister, innocent and gay,
That gathered wild flowers with him by the rill,
And in the golden dream what thoughts his bosom fill!

Yes, dear is Home! Whatever be our lot,
'Tis still a verdant Eden in our sight—
Earth's richest clime can show no lovelier spot;
The fields, how green—the lakes and streams, how
bright—
The air, how sweet—the sun, how mild his light—
The birds, how charming—and the flowers, how fair!
Oh! 'tis a Paradise of pure delight,
That from the soul no earthly power can tear,
For, wander where we will, our hearts are centred
there.

MY EARLY HOME.

WITHIN a lonely vale it stood—
My first, my dear-loved early home;
Behind it rose an aged wood,
Where oft, enraptured, I would roam
Along its alleys green;
For countless joys to me were there,
When morning broke in radiance fair,
Or when sweet eve, with softened air,
Smiled beauteous o'er the scene.

And near it was a little stream
That bard ne'er hallowed with his song;
Yet oh! 'twas bliss itself to dream
Beside it as it flowed along
In beauty down the dale.
Its gentle music's rise and fall
With transport would the soul enthrall;
Like harp-tones in some festive hall
It charmed that happy vale.

And when the joyous June arrayed
The banks and braes with golden broom,
And zephyrs 'mong the green leaves played,
All laden with the rich perfume
That many a blossom shed ;
O, then, 'twas sweet delight to me,
To linger by some dell or lea,
Amid the flowery luxury
That Nature there had spread.

Lone at the landscape's utmost bound
There stood an old baronial tower
That oft would waken thoughts profound
Of time's unconquerable power,
Of worth and beauty's fall ;
Struck with its ruin-rents sublime,
Its broken turrets I would climb,
While fancy roamed through vanished time,
Peopling each vacant hall.

And pleasant was our little cot :
It stood beside the murmuring stream ;
Ambitious pride might know it not,
For poor and lowly it did seem ;
But it was rich to me.

Beside its humble porch were heard
The music of the woodland bird,
And 'mong the flowers, by soft winds stirred,
The hum of wandering bee.

Ah! now the busy town has stretched
To that sweet streamlet's very brim,
And scenes that Nature once enriched
Dark wreaths of smoke make dull and dim;
Even the old wood looks bare;
Huge human dwellings thicken round;
But where, oh where are to be found
The pure, the simple joys that crowned
My youthful moments there?

SONNET.

THE MOUNTAIN STREAM.

How beautiful the lonely mountain stream !
In all its native wildness, down the steep
It nobly rolls—then lost its waters seem
Beneath the dark boughs of the forest deep—
Then bursting on the sight, with gentle sweep
It glides in silvery brightness ; and again
O'er fern-fringed linn its sun-lit billows leap
In foamy pride—then through the open plain
It tranquil strays, to mingle with the main.
So hastes away the stream of human life :
Awhile in brawling majesty it flows,
And frets and foams with adverse rocks at strife ;
Then to an almost waveless calm it grows,
And sinks with noiseless fall, to undisturbed repose.

BURNS CENTENARY POEM.

This Poem, which was written for the Burns Centenary, January 25, 1859, and for which the Kilmarnock Gold Medal was awarded, was read at the Centenary Dinner, in the George Inn Assembly Rooms, by the Chairman, Archibald Finnie, Esq. of Springhill, Provost of Kilmarnock.

OH! many a glorious name is ours,
 And many a thrilling bard we claim,
 Whose garlands of poetic flowers
 Are woven with our country's fame;
 But round fair Scotia's honoured brow
 'Twas Burns the brightest wreath did twine;
 And well, to-night, may thousands bow
 In homage at his hallowed shrine.

Are Nature's lovely charms his theme?
 How truthfully his numbers flow!
 We hear the murmuring of the stream;
 We hear the westland breezes blow;

We see, as o'er his page we pore,
The "daisy" blooming at our feet;
We feel the dewy "hawthorn hoar"
Around us shed its fragrance sweet.

And when he mourns departed worth,
Or beauty laid in death at rest,
How sad he breathes his sorrows forth!
How keen the anguish of his breast!
We seem to feel affliction's throes;
We seem to drop the pitying tear;
We seem to stand oppress'd with woes
Beside some loved one's early bier.

And mark his independent strain!
It fires the soul of humankind—
It curbs the petty tyrant's reign,
And fosters nobleness of mind;—
It makes the poor man stand elate,
Uncaring Grandeur's frown or smile,
And tells him *Worth* alone is great,
Though doomed in penury to toil.

And who is he that does not feel
Devotion in the "Cottar's Night,"
As all in artless reverence kneel
Before the God of life and light?

Of humble piety and prayer
What truer picture e'er was given,
To lure the soul from earthly care,
And lap it in the bliss of heaven ?

And when the stirring strain is heard
Of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"
We kindle at each burning word—
We walk the earth with firmer tread ;
And taught by that ennobling lay,
We nurse the patriotic flame—
We proudly scorn the tyrant's sway,
And glory in a freeman's name.

Then let us honour Scotia's Bard,
And toast his name with feelings warm ;
For oh ! though many a lyre is heard,
'Tis his that yields the sweetest charm ;—
'Tis his that strongly stirs at will
The deepest passions of the soul—
'Tis his the human heart shall thrill
Till time itself has ceased to roll.

SONNET.

ON THE DEATH OF "DELTA" (D. M. MOIR, Esq.)

WEEP, Caledonia, weep ! thy Delta's gone !
He whose loved lyre, like voice of summer bird,
Artless and bland, our hearts with rapture stirred,
And woke sweet feelings with its mellow tone.
Not like the torrent's dash it would astound ;
But, oh ! 'twould charm like the secluded rill,
Whose music lures us near some verdant hill,
To bask 'mid Nature's sweets that bloom around.
Yes, such was Delta's lyre ! Its gentle flow
Lulled the rapt soul in dear delicious dreams,
And led it forth, where virtue's blossoms blow,
In fancy's land, by ever-murmuring streams :
Mourn, Caledonia ! mourn thy minstrel's doom,
And weep as *he* did weep o'er Casa Wappy's tomb.

THE FATHER TO HIS DYING CHILD.

JUNE, 1845.

MY lovely child ! my lovely child !
Thou, too, art hastening to the tomb ;
Thy lips that late in beauty smiled,
Seem lifeless ; and the rosy bloom
That mantled o'er thy cheek so fair
Has fled, and death's pale hues are there.

Thy bosom heaves with suffering deep ;
But soon shall end thy troubles here,
And thou shalt calmly rest where sleep
Thy brothers and thy sisters dear,
Who sunk into the silent clay,
Like thee, in childhood's sunny day.*

* Eight children of the same family previously died in youth.

Who now, with voice of love and mirth,
And looks from guile and sadness free,
Will charm our hearts, and make our hearth
The happy scene of harmless glee ?
Ah, none! for in the grave's deep shade
Soon shall our loved ones all be laid.

Lo! through the lattice brightly beams
The summer sun, as if 'twould tell
Of verdant vales, and gushing streams,
And song of birds in yonder dell,
Where oft beside me thou wouldst stray,
Gathering the wild flowers by the way.

But ne'er again, sweet child, shalt thou
There wander playful by my side,
For death's cold dews are on thy brow;
And summer now, in all her pride
And radiant bloom, in vain to thee
Her glory spreads o'er glen and lea.

Thy favourite flower, the daisy meek,
No more thy little hands will pull,
But oft, in fancy's ear, 'twill speak
Of thee so sweet, so beautiful!
And haply wake for thee the sigh
When thy young dust in earth doth lie.

Yet happy, happy, is thy doom—
For blest are they that early die,
And leave this world of grief and gloom
While yet in childhood's purity;
But, oh! when heart is knit to heart,
How sad, how painful 'tis to part!

Farewell! loved innocent, farewell!
Perhaps ere flies another day,
Relentless Death's appalling knell
Me, too, will summon to the clay;
O, then may I, from earth set free,
In bliss eternal meet with thee.

S O N N E T.

Written in the Neighbourhood of Loudoun Kirk, Oct., 1851.

How sweet upon this rustic bridge to rest,
Amid the depths of solitude profound,
And gaze upon the glorious scene around,
In all the mellow tints of Autumn dressed.
Here no rude sounds the soul's deep joys molest :
Even the lone streamlet, in the glen below,
Scarce breathes, as if it feared, with noisy flow,
To break the stillness of a scene so blessed.
Sweet spot of woodland and of stream ! in thee
What charms of sylvan loveliness combine !
Here might the Atheist on each object see
The impress of Omnipotence divine ;
Here God's o'erpowering influence might he feel,
And, wrapt in solemn thought, before Him lowly kneel.

THE VILLAGE THORN.

SWEET village thorn! sweet village thorn!

Though now thy boughs are bleak and sere ;
Though time's rude storms thy trunk have torn,
Yet still to me thy form is dear—
Thou wak'st the sad yet pleasing sigh,
O'er perished hopes and faded joy.

Sweet village thorn! sweet village thorn!

When nature's leafy robes were thine,
And o'er me smiled blithe boyhood's morn,
What bosom-thrilling bliss was mine,
With gay compeers beneath thy spray,
At sunny noon or evening grey.

Then towered aloft thy dark green boughs,

Enriching with their bloom the spot,
Where, fringed with wild flowers, calmly flows
The mill-stream by the ivied cot—
Where parents once, with love and pride,
My feeble infant steps would guide.

S O N N E T.

ON THE DEATH OF HUGH MACDONALD, AUTHOR OF
"RAMBLES ROUND GLASGOW," &c.

AND art thou gone, dear friend? Alas! it seems
As if but one short day had glided by
Since last I saw thee, full of life and joy,
And roamed with thee along the moorland streams.
Yes, thou art gone, sweet Rambler, to thy rest;
But long thy pages, sparkling as the smile
Of sunny spring, will many a care beguile,
And wake delight in many a feeling breast.
Thou didst not soar with bold, poetic flight;
But who so well could paint the lowly flower
Glinting, half-hid, in some lone, leafy bower,
Or sweetly opening to the vernal light?
Thy voice was nature's voice, and few like thee
Could sing her simple charms by mountain, wood
or lea.

March, 1860.



MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

THY grave's among a thousand graves,
 And no memorial marks the spot,
 Save the wild flower that o'er it waves—
 The simple, sweet forget-me-not;
 Yet well I know that little mound
 From all the countless heaps around.

At morn or eve, when wandering there,
 Within that "city of the dead,"
 It needs no stone, with sculpture fair,
 To lead me to thy narrow bed;
 Ah! no; affection deep, sincere,
 Points to thy grave, my mother dear.

And oh! methinks 'tis sweeter far
 To rest in humble grave like thee,
 Where day's fair orb, or evening's star,
 Beams o'er the green turf bright and free;
 And where the wilding flowers are seen
 Bursting the grassy blades between.

And in that light that o'er thee streams,
And in those flow'rets budding forth,
Methinks a something ever seems
To tell me of thy spotless worth;
For in our little family bower
Thou wert the sunshine and the flower.

What boots it though no stone doth tell
Who in that lone grave lowly lies—
To me it hath a tongue;—a spell
That wakes a thousand sympathies—
That brightens up departed years,
As morn the misty landscape clears.


Even now, I see thy loving look—
I hear thy soothing voice again,
Soft as the whisper of the brook
Sweet stealing through some lonely glen,
And gentle as the breeze of June,
'Mong fragrant fields at sunny noon.

Yes, in that quiet, simple spot,
'Tis meet thy sacred dust should lie;
And, oh! though others heed it not,
I cannot coldly pass it by;
For tender memories of thee
Endear its very turf to me.

S O N N E T.

A M O T H E R ' S L O V E .

If yet there lingers in this earthly sphere
One virtue that partakes of heaven above,
'Tis that which constitutes a mother's love,
And speaks the soul of tenderness sincere :
It lives in all her looks, and in the tear
She weeps while bending o'er her dying child,
Whose blossom of existence has grown sere,
Just as in infant loveliness it smiled.
Yes! riches may forsake us—friends may change,
And leave us lonely in affliction's hour ;
But nought, O nought from us can e'er estrange
A mother's love, or quell its soothing power.
Through weal, through woe she blesses us, and even
In death's last throes she prays for us to Heaven.



THE POET'S WALK.

AT morn he seeks the upland wood,
Where some lone streamlet's waters roll;
And, midst the sylvan solitude,
What aspirations fire his soul,
As round he turns his musing eye
On valley, mountain, sea, and sky!

Along the elm-arched path he strays,
Where, here and there, through foliage green,
The vernal sunlight glittering plays,
Gilding each leaf with golden sheen,
And brightening many a lone recess
With hues of sweetest loveliness.

And there each little warbler's lay—
Each tiny rill and floweret coy—
To him the dearest charms convey;
And while he shares in "Nature's joy,"
On wings of praise his spirit soars
To Him who Nature's temple stores.

Perchance, upon some moss-spread stone
 He leans, the tall oak's boughs beneath,
While viewless lyres, with softest tone,
 Around him heavenly music breathe,
And waft his soul to fairyland,
Where all is beautiful and bland.

Or near the cairn that marks the spot,
 Where sleeps the dust of martyr bold,
He loves to pore; while round him float
 Bright visions of the days of old—
Days when for truth and Scotland's right,
Our fathers dared the tyrant's might.

While thus entranced he speaks in song—
 His music is a stream of bliss,
That, sweetly-murmuring, rolls along,
 To all diffusing happiness,
And spreading treasures richer far
Than ocean's hidden pearls are.

S O N N E T.

TO THE IVY.

SWEET, ever-verdant Ivy, thee I love,
Whether I view thee spread on ruin hoar,
Or see thy tapered leaflets mantling o'er
The gnarled oak that bends the stream above.
When Winter's early tempests sweep the earth,
And from the forest boughs their glories tear,
Thou bloomest on in beauty, green and fair,
As when the God of Nature gave thee birth;
And upward still thou climb'st, in light and shade,
In calms and storms, thy glorious sunward way:
Emblem, methinks, of Virtue, lovely maid,
Who, led by pure religion's heavenly ray,
Spurns the dull earth, and all that's doomed to fade,
And, hopeful, seeks a bright eternal day.

SCOTTISH POEMS.

MY FIRST BAWBEE.

O! NANE I trew on a' the yirth
Was happier than me,
When in my wee breck pouch I gat
My first bawbee.
I turned it roun' and roun' wi' pride,
Syne toddled aff wi' glee
To wair, on something that was guid,
My first bawbee.

I met auld grannie at the door ;
Quo she, "Noo, Rab, tak care,
Nae feckless whigmaleeries buy
When ye gang to the fair ;
A gaucie row or sonsie scone
Is best for ane that's wee—
Mind, muckle lies in how ye spen'
Your first bawbee."

But grannie's words were soon forgot
 When to the fair I gaed,
And saw sae mony ferlies there
 On ilka stan' arrayed.
I glowr'd at this, I glowr'd at that,
 Wi' roving, greedy e'e,
And felt dumfounder't how to wair
 My first bawbee.

Here apples lay in mony a creel,
 A' tempting to the view,
And plums and pears whase vera leuk
 Brocht water to my mou';
And there were tosh wee picture beuks
 Spread out a' fair to see—
They seemed to say—"Come here and spen'
 Your first bawbee."

I kent the ane wad gust the gab,
 The ither tell me how
Cock Robin fell that waefu' day
 The Sparrow drew his bow;
But baith, waesucks! I couldna get,
 And sae wi' tearfu' e'e
I swithered lang on whilk to wair
 My first bawbee.

At length a wheedlin' Eerish loon
Began to bawl and brag ;
" Come now," said he, " my little lad,
And try the Lucky Bag ;
If you have but one copper got,
For it you may get three—
Shure, never venture never won,
Come, sport your bawbee."

Thinks I, this is the vera thing,
I'll mak' my bawbee twa,
And syne I'll get the plums or pears,
The wee bit beuk and a'.
Sae at the Bag I tried my luck,
But hope was dung agee—
A *blank* was mine, and sae I lost
My first bawbee.

A tear cam' happin' ower my cheek
As sad I daunert hame,
Wi' hunger rumbling up and doon
Like win' within my wame.
I tellt auld grannie a' my tale—
" Ye've gaen far wrang," quo she,
" But muckle guid may yet come out
Your lost bawbee."

And true she spak'—my *loss* was *gain*—
It lair'd me usefu' lair—
It made me aft, sinsyne, tak' tent
O' mony a gilded snare ;
And still when loons to catch the plack
Their fleechin phrases gie,
A something whispers, "Robin, mind
Your first bawbee."

**“WHARE’ER THERE’S A WILL THERE IS
ALWAYS A WAY.”**

Originally printed in “Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal.”

LANGSYNE, when I first gaed to schule, I was glaikit ;
 In books and in learning nae pleasure had I ;
 And when, for my fauts, wi’ the taws I was paikit,
 “I canna do better,” was aye my reply.
 “’Deed, Rab,” quo’ my mither, “for daffin’ and playin’
 There’s nocht ye can manage by nicht or by day ;
 But this let me tell ye, and mind what I’m sayin’—
 Whare’er there’s a will there is always a way.

“Just look at our preacher : when but a bit callan,
 The ills o’ cauld puirtith he aft had to dree ;
 But to better his lot the puir chiel aye was willin’—
 At schule and at wark ever eident was he.
 Sage books he wad read, and their truths he wad cherish,
 And earnestly sprauchle up learning’s steep braise ;
 And noo he’s Mess John o’ his ain native parish—
 Sae whar there’s a will there is always a way.

“And, man, if ye saw how the manse is bedeckit!

Ilk room’s like a palace, it’s plenish’d sae fine;
And then, wi’ the best in the land he’s respeckit,
And aft wi’ My Lord is invited to dine.

O! Rab, then, be active, frae him tak’ example—

His case speaks mair powerfu’ than ocht I can say;
And soon ye will find that your talents are ample,
For whar there’s a will there is always a way.

“What tho’ we are cottars? the puirest may flourish,
And wha wadna rise wi’ the glorious few?

Industry works wonders—its spirit aye nourish—

It isna the drone gathers hinney, I trew.
Then onward, my laddie, ye canna regret it—
What wrecks and what tears hae been caused by
delay!

If noble your wish is, press on, ye will get it!

For whar there’s a will there is always a way.”

Thus spak, my auld mither; ilk word seem’d a sermon;

But just rather warldly as ane micht alloo;
But haith it inspired me and made me determine

To haud to the *lair*, and keep *progress* in view.

Sae I tried ilka project instruction to gather:

When herdin’ the sheep for our laird, Ringan Gray,
The Bible and Bunyan I read ’mang the heather—

Ay, whar there’s a will there is always a way.

But my faither he dee’d, and to help my auld mither,

I noo had to struggle wi’ hardship and care;

And aften I thocht I wad stick a’ thegither,

But something within me, said—“Never despair.”

At last I grew bien, for I toiled late and early—

To College I gaed, and I’m noo a D.D.,

And placed in the time-honoured Kirk o’ Glenfairly—

Sae whar there’s a will there is always a way.

The manse—but I shouldna wi’ vanity crack o’t—

Is as cozie a beild as a body could see,

Hauf-hid ’mang auld trees, wi’ braw parks at the
back o’t,

Whar lambs, ’mang the gowans, are sportin’ wi’
glee.

I’ve got a bit wife, too—a rich winsome lady;

In short, I hae a’ that a mortal could hae :

Then, onward, ye youths ! as my auld mither said aye—

Whare’er there’s a will there is always a way.



THE AULD BELL'S LAMENT.*

ALAS! alas! wi' grief I hear
 My doom is sealed—my end is near;
 The place I lang hae held sae dear
 I noo maun lea';
 And is there nane to drap a tear,
 Or mourn for me?

Had I grown crazy or tongue-tackit,
 Or had my sides been even crackit,
 I wadna care though I were packit
 Clean out the toon;
 But when I'm neither rent nor rackit,
 Why pu' me doon?

*The bell here alluded to belonged to the Low Church, Kilmarnock. It was taken down in August, 1853, and a new one of larger dimensions placed in its stead. The old bell bore this inscription:—"BLESSED IS THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE IOYFVLL SOVND, PS. 89, 15, NVM. 10, 10. ALBERT DANIEL, CELI ME FECERVNT, KILLMARNOCK, AN. DOM., 1697."

But hear my tale :—Thrice fifty year
I've been a faithfu' servant here;
On gala days I've rung to cheer
 And keep you gay;
And mournfu' toll'd when on death's bier
 Your big folk lay.

Langsyne, I mind, when puir Prince Charlie,
'Mang Highland hills was routed fairly,
Though vext awee that Fate sae sairly
 The chiel had dung,
I spread the news, nor did it sparely,
 Wi' rattlin' tongue.

And soon as e'er my voice began,
Folk gathered like some Norlan' clan—
The vera Bailies pechin' ran,
 Fu' proud and braw,
To drink to George a reaming can,
 In Council Ha'.

And aft when war was a' the fashion,
And fae met fae in bluidy passion—
When Fame declared the British nation
 Had victor been,
I rung a peal of exultation
 Frae morn till e'en.

O! then ilk body was licht-hearted,
Cauld, carking cares had a' departed,
Sae blithe were they the French were thwarted,
And sent adrift,
That bonfires bleezed, and rockets darted
Throughout the lift.

And though the youths kicked up a row,
Nane cared, for a' were frien's, I trow ;
Even tottering age, wi' snaw-white pow,
Had his gaffaw ;
While Robin Walker at my tow
Seesawed awa'.

And aften, too, when fires broke out,
Wi' fearfu' flames and flakes o' soot,
I was the first, ye needna doubt,
To lowse my tongue,
And warn the neebours a' about,
Baith auld and young.

But, trowth, to tell ye a' I've seen
Wad gar ye glower wi' wilder'd e'en ;
Twa noble earls o' the Dean
I kent fu' brawly,
And a' your auld forbears, I ween,
Sae douce and haly.

Methinks I see the bodies yet,
A social, kindly, cadgie set,
At fairs and markets a' aft,
 In hodden-grey,
Or in the kirk fu' doucely met
 On Sabbath day.

Na, even My Lord or Lady then
Wad crack richt cosh wi' common men,
And kindly speer how they did fen
 For milk and meal,
And happy seem'd when they did ken
 That a' were weel.

Dear happy days o' auld langsyne !
The thochts o' you, O ! wha wad tine ?
Ye conjure up a feeling kin'
 Within the heart,
That modern things, though buskit fine,
 Can ne'er impart.

And even my tones can wake that feeling,
When on some wand'rer's ear they're stealing,
Wha seeks his lang-lost native sheiling
 By Marnock's stream—
To him my music seems revealing
 Youth's happy dream.

And as my weel-kent voice is heard,
He thinks upon the auld kirk-yard—
He seeks the spot wi' true regard—
 He daunners in,
And bathes wi' tears the grassy sward
 That haps his kin.

There may be modern bells aroun',
That, cuif-like, mak' a greater soun';
But never slicht the simple croon
 O' ane that's aul'—
It's aye the guid aul'-fashioned tune
 That moves the saul.

O! then, since I sae lang hae hung,
And mony a thrilling peal hae rung,
Plead, plead my cause wi' pen and tongue,
 Or—luckless lot—
Like some auld pat, I may be flung
 In furnace hot.

Nae doubt ye'll get a gaucier bell,
That for awee will jow and swell;
But, aiblins, though I say't mysel',
 Ye'll ne'er get ane
Will stan' the tooth o' Time sae fell,
 As I hae dune.

Gude sauf's! I feel, though I am auld,
As souple-tongued, as stark and bauld,
As when I first up here was haul'd,
Midst muckle cheering,
Yet hundreds think me, as I'm tauld,
Scarce worth the hearing.

But such, alas! is aye the gait ;
When ane gets auld he's out o' date ;
The brainless fop, wi' pride elate,
Is aft respeckit,
While guid auld worth, wi' manners blate,
Is sair negleckit.

But hear, O! hear my earnest prayer,—
Since I maun flit for evermair,
For me some ither place prepare,
And nocht shall daunt me,
To ring wi' birr, baith late and air,
Whene'er ye want me.

Or if nae mair ye'll let me peal,
O! grant me, grant me a bit beil',
Wi' some kind antiquarian chiel'—
Some pauky billie;
For, oh! I'm wae to bid fareweel
To dear Auld Killie.

ANSWER TO "THE AULD BELL'S LAMENT."

SUPPOSED TO BE SPOKEN BY THE BELL OF
THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

AULD worthy frien' and neebour dear,
Your waefu' wail I chanced to hear,
And, man, I've drappit mony a tear
O' grief sinsyne,
For your sad fate, I muckle fear,
Will soon be mine.

Yes, I may be, and that richt soon,
Frae my bit steeple haurled down,
For when I chance to glowr aroun',
Sic change is seen,
That haith I'm pinch'd to ken the toon
Whar lang I've been.

Ance ilka body kent anither,
 And, as ye've said, were pack wi' ither;
 Noo, wi' sic folk ye'll scarce forgether,
 In lane or street—
 They're a' unkent and queer thegither
 Ye're sure to meet.

Gane is ilk house wi' divot riggin',
 Whar douce auld bodies lived fu' snug in;
 And noo, in some high, tower-like biggin',
 Ilk birkie shines,—
 Ye'd think they'd a' made rich by diggin'
 In foreign mines.

O! guileless, sweet simplicity!
 Nae chiel' should e'er tine sicht o' thee;
 Far lovelier are thy charms to me
 Than art's display,—
 Its gowden glare, tho' fair to see,
 Aft lures astray.

'Bout some new plan ilk billie clatters,
 And tries, forsooth, to ape his betters;
 In *airs*, in *dress*, and even in *letters*,
 Ilk ane maun swell;
 But trowth it's no a' gowd that glitters,
 As ye can tell.

And gude kens whar the thing may drap—
 It's noo ayont the steeple tap ;
 For some can gar the spirits rap,
 And lift the tables ;
 And seem richt wud gif ony chap
 Should think it fables.

But, man, your case sae keen I felt it,
 I've aye been dowie since ye tellt it ;
 In trowth I feel as I'd been pelted
 By some wild rabble,
 To think that ye maun noo be melted,
 For a' your trouble.

But, hark ye frien', I hae a scheme
 That yet may keep ye safe at hame :
 Next Council nicht for you I'll claim
 The Board's protection,
 And tell them it wad spread their fame
 In ilk direction.

And gif they're a' in tift to hear it,
 Your ilka virtue I'll declare it—
 I'll tell how aft ye've rung wi' spirit,
 Nor thocht it hard—
 I'll tell them that auld age should merit
 Their kind regard.

I'll tell them, what I mind fu' weel,
 That ye sent forth a joyfu' peal,
 When Fillans* (noo in death's low beil")
 Yon Statue reared,
 To honour Shaw, the generous chiel',
 Whase name's revered.

I'll tell them, too, how ye hae stood
 Thrice fifty years afore the Flood; †
 And, fegs! tho' I should raise their blood
 I winna care,
 'Twill put my tongue in sterner mood
 To urge my prayer.

Yes! I 'wi' birr will speak my min';
 And should their Honours a' incline
 To lo'e ye just for auld langsyne,
 Wi' feelings keen,
 My place I freely will resign
 To you, auld frien'.

* Mr. James Fillans, the sculptor of the Statue of Sir James Shaw which stands at the cross of Kilmarnock. Mr. Fillans was born in 1808, and died suddenly in September, 1852. He was a native of Lanarkshire. "Among the last works which he modelled was a statue of 'Grief, or Rachel weeping for her children,' which he intended to be placed over his father's grave."

† The memorable Flood which occurred in Kilmarnock on the morning of the 14th July, 1852.

I ken my soun' is but a jingle,
 That scarce can reach a neebour's ingle,
 Sae, as I've said, I'll cease to tingle,
 To get ye here,
 Whar ye wi' ither bells may mingle
 For mony a year.

But, O! I'm fleyed that soon or late,
 We baith maun toddle out the gate;
 Yet why compleen? Time, like a spate,
 Sends a' ajee—
 Empires themsel's maun yield to Fate,
 And sae maun we.

AULD JANET.

ALAS! in the grave noo auld Janet is laid;
 O lang may the turf o'er her ashes be green;
 For mony a simmer will flourish and fade,
 Ere a body sae thrifty amang us be seen.
 I kent her langsyne, when a lass o' nineteen,
 And fair as the dew-pearled flower on the lea—
 A maidenly modesty sweetened her mien,
 And mony a fond-hearted wooer had she.

 But, as ill luck wad hae't, she gat buckled to ane
 Wha kept the puir body in puirtith and strife,
 And he left her at last wi' a wee helpless wean,
 To fecht for themsel's in the battle o' life;
 But Janet ne'er sunk 'neath adversity's blast,
 Nor e'er socht a plack frae the parish, I ween—
 Though puir, she was noble in mind to the last,
 And never could stoop to do ocht that was mean.

In hairst she wad shear ; and when winter cam' roun'
She span at the wheel, and she hain'd what she wan;
At length she set up a bit shop in the toon,
And to buy frae auld Janet ilk kind neebour ran.
Her stock it was little, but thrift made it mair,
And justice in dealing she aye made her law ;
Her gait, too, was frank, baith to rich and to puir,
And this brocht her custom and friendship frae a'.

The beggars a' lo'ed her the hale kintra roun',
For they aye gat a morsel frae her wi' a smile;
But gansel she gied to the ne'er-do-weel loon,
Wha socht for an amous when able to toil.
"Gae 'wa!" she exclaimed, "to some labour begin—
Ye're hale lith and limm, and there's plenty to do—
Lea'e begging, ye knaves, to the cripple and blin',
Or croichlin' auld age that's sair pinch'd to get
through."

Ilk Sabbath fu' tosh in the kirk she appeared;
But thinkna she gaed in the fashion to be;
Na, na ; frae her youth she religion revered,
And pitied the man wha its truths couldna see.
In her wee claspéd Bible, wi' meek solemn air,
She'd earnestly look for the *text* or the *psalm*,
And syne to the preacher she'd listen wi' care,
And feel ilka word as a soul-soothing balm.

Her bairn—a bit laddie—grew fair to the sight ;
At schule, o'er his parts, wad the dominie brag ;
Na, mair, he declared that his genius was bricht,
And, if spared, that his pow in a pu'pit should wag.
But Janet demurred to the dominie's skill,
For the callan she saw was for business inclined,
And she thocht that nae birkie the pu'pit should fill,
Wha wasna by nature for preachin' designed.

Sae a clerkship she gat him, and bade him tak' care
O' the rocks and the shallows in life's stormy tide;—
“Be active,” quo' she, “and the better ye'll fare,
As onward along its dark waters ye glide.”
He took her advice ; and what think ye he's noo ?
A merchant worth thousands, a Provost and a',
And his auld mither's worth he inherits, I trew,
For he strives to do guid to the grit and the sma'.

At last hoary age made auld Janet decay,
And calmly and meekly to death she resigned,
But her memory shall live, for she left, like the ray
Of the fair setting sun, a sweet glory behind.
Yet, weel may we shed bitter tears o'er her fa'—
Her virtues were mony, her failings were few—
Though humbly she lived she did guid to us a':
She showed what the hand that is willing can do.

EPISTLE TO J. ANDERSON, ESQ.,

Author of the "Scottish Temperance Melodist."

DEAR Sir, ae bonnie morn shortsyne,
 When August's sun did sweetly shine,
 I gat your letter, frank and kin',
 Frae postman chiel',
 And, Johnnie lad, to speak my min',
 It pleased me weel.

"Come, Muse," quo' I, "and sing ance mair—
 Inspire my harp wi' some sweet air,
 An *Embro* Bard o' sense and lair
 Has roos'd thy name,
 And on thy brow has twined wi' care
 A wreath o' fame."

She, smiling, said, in accents fain,
 "Strike, strike thy dormant lyre again,
 And thank, in heart-felt, frien'ly strain,
 Auld Reekie's poet,
 For base ingratitude's a stain
 On a' that show it!"

Sae I, obedient, sen' my thanks
Sincere, frae Marnock's flowery banks :
Amang my frien's your name noo ranks,
And shall be there
Till fate shall kick me aff my shanks
To rise nae mair.

When first I read your letter slee,
I scann'd it o'er wi' critic e'e,
But fient a failin' I could see—
 'Twas sweet in tone—
Like burnie wimpling wild and free,
 It glided on.

But, lad, I'd be an empty chiel'
To think a' truth ye sing sae weel ;
Parnassus I maun higher speal
Ere I can claim
The mantle o' the sweet M'Neil
O' deathless fame.

What! in this age, when ilka glen
Can boast its heaven-born minstrel men,
Can I expect my feeble pen
 To win regard?
Na, na, your praises ye maun sen'
 To some true bard.

But, Sir, your ain wee Bookie teems
Wi' generous, philanthropic dreams,
While o'er ilk page there richly gleams
 A mental light,
Like simmer sunshine on the streams—
 Warm, cheering, bright.

Unlike some Bards wha lag behind
The soul-inspiring march o' mind,
Wi' feelings tender and refined,
 O'er vice ye weep,
And mak' the Muse *improve* mankind,
 Wi' precepts deep.

Then persevere wi' sang and sonnet;
Parnassus-hill keep croonin' on it;
And Fame's bright wreath ye yet may won it;
 Then men, I trew,
In reverence will lift their bonnet,
 Dear Sir, to you.

But what is fame? an empty sound,
By living minstrel seldom found;
When 'neath the churchyard's grassy mound
 He, mouldering, lies,
'Tis *then* his name's wi' honour crown'd,
 Mid deafening cries.

Or, haply, o'er his last lane bed
The gracefu' column rears its head;
Yet he whase glory thus is spread
Through earth's vast sphere,
Was marked as crazed, or pinch'd for bread,
When wandering here.

Oh, mockery dire! enough to blight
The opening buds of genius bright—
Enough to quench the glorious light
Of Poet's soul,
And freeze the fountains of delight
That frae it roll.

Yet still 'tis sweet to woo the Nine,
At lovely Nature's sacred shrine—
A transport words can ne'er define
It does impart,
As, fresh and warm, line after line
Comes frae the heart.

But I maun close, my canty carle,—
At you may Fortune never snarl;
And when Death at your door plays tirl,
And says, "Ye're mine,"
May ye be wafted to a warl'
Of bliss divine.

SECOND EPISTLE TO J. ANDERSON, ESQ.

AULD-FARRANT Frien', my Harp again
 I tune responsive to your strain;
 For trowth your thoughts, sae sage, yet plain,
 Hae made me vogie,
 And blither far than Bacchus' train
 When o'er their coggie.

As if ye sat wi' crony crackin',
 Your words are easy, kind, and takin'—
 Dunce-like your brains ye're never rackin'
 To get them out—
 Haith! ye're a "Bard o' Nature's makin',"
 Withoutin doubt.

Na, what is nobler, ye inherit
 A manly, philanthropic spirit;
 And he wha sings without *this* merit,
 Tho' bauld his tone,
 Is but—I fearlessly declare it—
 An idle drone.

'Twas surely honest Nature's plan,
When gifts she gied the Bardie clan,
That they should strew the path o' man
 Wi' pleasure's flowers,
And happier mak', in ilka lan',
 Life's weary hours.

And this, I'm proud to think's your aim—
Your watchword to the heights o' fame;
Wi' canty sang ye cheer the hame
 Of honest toil,
And raise, on cheek o' couthie dame,
 Contentment's smile.

Now let me tell, like your's, my lot
Was cast in Puirtith's lowly cot;
But Nature's beauties round the spot
 Were wild and fair—
Rock, wood, and stream, and glen, and grot,
 Were mingled there.


There, too, by Marnock's mossy flood,
The Dean in ruined grandeur stood—
Wi' reverential eye I viewed
 Its turrets lane,
And sighed for tales of ages rude,
 And chiefs lang gane.

Thus was I early led to pore
On sylvan scene and castle hoar,
Or gather rich historic lore
 Frae ancient page,
Or wi' sweet sang my mem'ry store
 Frae minstrels sage.

When Spring in dewy tears had birth,
Or Simmer deck'd the smiling earth,
I stole frae village scenes of mirth
 At day's decline,
And poured my artless numbers forth
 At Nature's shrine.

But chief when yellow Autumn's reign,
And a' her blithesome days were gane,
And eerie o'er the leaf-strewn plain
 Came Winter rude,
I loved to wander forth alane
 By stream or wood.

The roseless brier, the shivering tree,
The withered verdure of the lea,
The faded bowers, where late the bee
 Was humming gay,
Like monitors, reminded me
 Of man's decay.




O Nature! thou art ever sweet!
 Thy works wi' wisdom how replete!
 In flowery nook or bare retreat,
 In calms or storms,
 Thou scatt'rest lessons at our feet,
 Amid thy charms.

Yes; lovely Spring, wi' sun and shower—
 Blithe Simmer, gemm'd wi' mony a flower—
 Mild Autumn, wi' her gowden dower
 Crowning the field—
 And Winter, wondrous in his power,
 Instruction yield.

Then, Anderson, be ours the theme,
 Inspired by mountain, wood, and stream;
 There, radiant 'neath the sun's bright beam,
 What glories shine!
 And there what vast materials teem
 For thought divine!

Even things minute—the herb, the flower,
 The insect gay, in sunny bower,
 Declare the great Creator's power,
 And boundless love,
 And lift, in contemplation's hour,
 The mind above.



Can aught sae fair in Art be seen
 As wee bit gowan on the green?
 Or wilding rose, at morn serene,
 In beauty's pride?
 Or primrose sweet, wi' modest mien,
 By burnie's side?

Can aught compare wi' autumn day,
 Sweet-breaking o'er the mountains grey?
 Or noon, when swells the reaper's lay
 On gentle gale?
 Or night, when Luna's tresses play
 On hill and vale?

Can aught amid the city's crowd
 Delight like landscape streak'd wi' gowd?
 Or laverock, hailing sun-lit cloud
 Wi' cheerfu' sang?
 Or burnie, murmuring faint or loud
 The braes amang?

Can aught mair charming meet the ear
 Than wee bird's lilt, sae saft, sae clear,
 That sweetly steals, when e'ening's near,
 Frae flowery thorn?
 Or echoes frae some rose-clad brier
 At early morn?

Ah, no ; amang the woods and plains,
Harmonious wi' enchanting strains,
A soothing heavenly *something* reigns,
That, like a spell,
Our bosom's fond affection chains
To stream and dell.

True source of sang! nae fabled spring
Can sweeter inspiration bring ;
Then let us still to Nature cling,
Baith late and air,
For he wha lo'es her, best can sing
Her beauties fair.

Oct., 1850.

TO A LITTLE DOG,

ON GETTING IT FROM A FRIEND.

THOU'S welcome here, wee glowrin' duggie,
 Wi' tapered tail and hingin' luggie;
 And haith, I'll strive to keep thee snug aye
 Frae cauld and care;
 And while there's ocht within my coggie,
 Thou's get a share.

For Burns's Luath—great in fame—
 Thee noo, wi' due respect, I name;
 And thou, I houp, will be the same—
 A social beastie—
 Wi' rowth'o' sense and love o' hame
 Within thy breastie.

And ne'er, I trust, thou'll snowk and snarl,
 And at the bairnies yowf and haurl;
 Nor yelp at ony puir auld carle
 In beggar's duddies;
 Nor e'er wi' neebour duggies quarrel,
 Like ane that wud is.

For tak' my word for't, guid ne'er flows
Frae crackit croon or bluidy nose ;
Na, even when kings deal out their blows
On war's red plain,
A toomer pouch and thinner brose
Is a' the gain.

But should some surly cur attack thee,
And try his humble slave to mak' thee,
Then staun thy grun', nor laith nor slack be
His pride to tame,
And ither dugs o' sense will back thee,
And roose thy name.

But lad, it's no for deeds o' weir,
Or bluidy wark that thou's brocht here ;
Thy task will be my beild to cheer
Wi' plays and pranks,
And roam wi' me when forth I steer
By Marnock's banks.

Yes, there, when Spring adorns the lea,
Thro' wood and dell thou'll trot wi' me,
Where birdies sing on ilka tree
The hale day lang,
And burnies jink, as if in glee,
The knowes amang.

And whiles, when simmer skies are bricht,
We'll speel to Craigie's tapmost hicht,
And there (if thou can feel delight
 In-ocht that's grand)
Thou'll marvel at the glorious sicht
 O' sea and land.

But nae wee beastie thou maun kill
When wand'ring out by wood or hill;
For ilka thing its sphere does fill
 By Nature's law,
And life and power to roam at will
 Are dear to a'.

But hear thou this, my wee bit duggie,
Thou'll fin' life's road is hard and scroggie,
And scrimpit whiles may be thy coggie;
 But honest be,
And never bring the name o' roguie
 On thee or me.

Na, na, tho' puirtith should prevail,
Ne'er snoove awa' wi' hingin' tail,
And stap thy nose in ithers' kail
 For sowp or bane;
Far better hae a scanty meal
 That's a' thy ain.

And last of a', if thou would win
Regard frae me and a' my kin,
Thou aye maun show, when *out* or *in*,
A faithfu' heart,
And ready be, through thick and thin,
To tak' my part.

And should I live to see the day,
When thy bit thread o' life gies way,
I'll lay thee saftly in the clay,
'Neath some auld tree,
And owre thee croon a dowie lay,
Wi' tearfu' e'e.

THE LITTLE DOG'S ADDRESS,

ON BEING SENT AWAY TO A NEW MASTER.

O MAISTER dear, what's wrang ava ?
 Why send your wee bit dug awa ?
 If I hae broken friendship's law,
 Or dune ye ill,
 Wi' generous heart forget it a'
 And lo'e me still.

I ne'er was gi'en to thievish greed,
 And wasna ill to lodge or feed—
 Sic draps o' kail or bits o' bread
 As ye could spare,
 Weel pleased I took, nor fashed my head,
 To look for mair.


Anither thing ye mind fu' weel,
 I cheer'd wi' pranks your lowly beil ;
 And then whene'er ye gaed afield
 On simmer days,
 I led the way when ye did speel
 The flowery braes.

And when enraptured ye did seem
By some auld wood or fairy stream,
Then laith to break your happy dream,
 I scoured awa,
Or beikit in the gowden beam
 By some green shaw.

And when the gloamin' hour cam' roun',
And by the fire your sangs ye'd croon,
Beside your feet I streek'd me doon,
 And there did lie,
Nor made, I trew, the slichtest soun'
 To mar your joy.

And aye when frien's on you did ca',
I wagg'd my tail to welcome a',
And was richt vogie when I saw
 You sae respeckit ;
For nae ane likes, 'mang great or sma',
 To be negleckit.

And aft when loons, at e'ening late,
Cam' roaring fu' adoun the gait,
I, in an instant, took my seat
 Ahint the door,
To guard you and your couthie mate
 Frae sic a core.



Or if a mouse but gied a cheep,
Tho' I was snoring hauf asleep,
As quick as thocht I up wad leap,
 And glowr aroun',
Resolved within the house to keep
 Sic vermin doon.

Nae doubt I hae my fauts, but then,
Just search the toon frae en' to en',
And greater fauts 'mang dugs and men
 Ye're sure to see ;
Na, even yoursel', ye brawly ken,
 Gangs whiles agee.

Then here, O maister, let me bide,
I'll be your frien' whate'er betide—
Your wee bit canty ingle-side
 Has joys to me
That a' the stately halls o' pride
 Can never gie.

But I maun gang : it's your decree ;
Yet ere your dear auld house I lea'e,
Just let me lick your haun awae
 In friendship true,
For tho' ye've lost regard for me,
 My heart's wi' you.

CARRICK'S WELL.

CARRICK'S well is a little muscled spring near the Brother-Loch, in the parish of Mearns, Renfrewshire. It was so named by the late Hugh Macdonald, author of "Rambles Round Glasgow," &c., when he and the writer of the present volume, in company with a few friends, were enjoying an autumn stroll in that locality, where they had met annually for several years. In one of a series of papers, entitled "Pilgrimages to Remarkable Places," which Macdonald was then writing for the *Morning Journal*, the discovery and christening of the little spring is thus noticed:—"Proceeding down the green hillside, we discover a small spring of water oozing from a breastwork of stone—lichened and grey with years. We resolve to form it into a well. A basin is dug by willing hands—every one seems to enjoy the ploy—while masses of stone are gathered and heaped around the fountainhead, until it presents a really picturesque appearance. Then we have it christened 'Carrick's Well,' after one of our most genial mates, amidst a succession of cheers, which seem rather to astonish a flock of wild ducks, and forthwith sends them out of their sedgy concealment, squattering away athwart the lake. In half an hour, when the water has had time to clear, we are rewarded for our labours by as delicious a cold draught as ever moistened the throat of a way-worn pilgrim. Our benison be on that little icy spring—that green spot in the waste—and may it continue for centuries to fur-

nish the passing traveller, and the solitary shepherd of the hills, with a watery boon as precious and refreshing as that which we now drink to its honour."

The Brother-Loch, it may be mentioned, which lies at the foot of the hill where the spring is situated, was a favourite resort of Professor Wilson in his younger years, and, according to him, the festival of Mayday was celebrated on its banks in the olden time by persons of both high and low degree. The Loch derives its name from the sad circumstance of three brothers having been drowned in its waters when bathing. "No one," says Macdonald, "saw the death struggle; but after a search had been instituted, they were found locked in each other's arms among the treacherous water lilies."

It may be added, that when seated by the spring, Macdonald suggested that he and the present writer should each compose a little poem under the name of "Carrick's Well." Whether he ever attempted the task—a task for which he was well fitted—is uncertain; and it was not till some time after his death, when his suggestion was brought to mind, that the following verses were written. They were addressed, as they themselves imply, to the same circle of acquaintances on their again meeting by the little moorland fountain.

Now Simmer's sunny smiles are gane,
And Autumn fadeth on the plain;
Then come, ere Winter sweeps amain
O'er hill and dell,
We'll spend the social hour again,
By Carrick's Well.

The lovely loch before us spread—
The wild birds sailing overhead—
The braes with moorland blossoms clad,
A' join to tell
That mony a rural charm is shed
By Carrick's Well.

What though it be 'mang wilds remote—
What though nae dwelling mark the spot,
Save here and there some wee bit cot
By field or fell,
By us it ne'er can be forgot,
Sweet Carrick's Well.

Like some dear haunt of early joy,
Of love, or friendship lang gane by,
Bright-pictured on our memory
The scene shall dwell ;
And fancy oft will fondly hie
To Carrick's Well.

For here the Rambler oft would stray,
And spend with us the autumn day,
Marking each little flow'ret gay,
With dewy bell,
Sweet-blushing in the sunny ray
By Carrick's Well.





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